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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 000391

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STATE FOR EUR/WE, EUR/RPM RCARLAND AND ACOPE, SCA/A ARUSH

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TAGS: [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#) [UK](#)  
SUBJECT: HMG AGREES ON NEED FOR ISAF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ANSF  
TRAINERS -- BUT OFFERS NO NEW COMMITMENTS

REF: SECSTATE 14366

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Richard LeBaron  
for reasons 1.4 a, b, and d

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. HMG agrees on the urgent need to fill the shortage of ISAF trainers and mentors for the Afghan National Security Forces and has encouraged allies to help fill the shortfall, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials told Poloff February 19 (reftel). FCO officials did not confirm any new UK commitments to help fill the shortfall, but noted that their statements to Poloff were an initial, "informal" discussion of the shortfall issue. One official stressed that "decision making on new commitments will become more difficult as we move toward" the spring UK general election, also noting that major "financial constraints" would considerably influence any decision regarding the deployment of additional personnel to Afghanistan. End Summary.

¶2. (C/NF) HMG agrees that ISAF faces an urgent shortage of trainers and mentors and HMG is in "constant communication" with allies to encourage them to help fill the shortfall, Sara Everett (PROTECT), the Deputy Head of the Afghanistan Group at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), told Poloff February 19 (reftel). "We support your objectives regarding the need for trainers and we've tried to maximize our resources" in Afghanistan, Everett continued. She noted that the UK deployed an additional 500 troops to Afghanistan late last year and that those troops were engaged in training efforts. "Decision making on new commitments will become more difficult as we move toward" the spring UK general election (exact date TBD), she said. Everett added that HMG's major "financial constraints" would considerably influence any decision regarding the deployment of additional personnel to Afghanistan. Everett stressed that political and financial considerations are important factors, but she stressed that she did not seek to imply that the HMG would rule out more trainers and mentors to Afghanistan. She also stated that the results of Operation Moshtarak will affect the number of personnel who will be available to train; HMG will reassess "where and how many" personnel should be deployed after the conclusion of the operation.

¶3. (C/NF) Kenny Taylor (PROTECT), a Political Military Desk Officer in the FCO's Afghanistan Group, who participated in the meeting with Everett, stated that HMG "completely" agrees regarding the need for increased training of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). "Addressing shortfalls of NTM-A is critical, and a focus of our own burden sharing lobbying," he stressed. Taylor said he did "not envision a major uplift" of British trainers or mentors, although he

noted that the UK might fill a few senior staff positions. Sarah Gravenstede (PROTECT), a Desk Officer on the FCO's Rule of Law Team in the Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit, who participated in the meeting with Everett, noted that the EU Police Mission's (EUPOL) shortfalls are also a priority concern, noting that approximately 32 UK civilian police officers are serving in Afghanistan. She also stated, without providing further details, that the UK might beef up its Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (POMLT) presence in Afghanistan. (The UK currently has six teams deployed.)

14. (C/NF) Everett asked Poloff to consider her statements and the statements of her colleagues as an initial, "informal" response to our points regarding ISAF's shortage of trainers and mentors (reftel). She promised a "formal" response would be forthcoming.

Comment  
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15. (C/NF) There is a strong sense within HMG and the Conservative opposition that other allies need to do more in Afghanistan; HMG will be watching closely to see what other allies do to help fill the trainer and mentor shortfall. Our interlocutors repeatedly remind us that HMG is in a dire financial situation and that budget woes impact every major, and many minor, decisions -- and that many decisions may have to wait until after this spring's general election. On the other hand, a critical element of UK policy is to turn over responsibility to Afghan forces, so they recognize a clear interest in supporting the process.

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